Senator Richard Schweiker
U.S.Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

7/7/76

Dear Dick,

Life would be simpler and easier for me if I could accept any part of your letter of 7/2/76. I do not nejoy the kind of life that has been forced upon me if I am to meet my responsibilities, I do not enjoy what reports like yours mean in extra work for me and I particularly do not like what honest comment on your report demands.

Your concluding paragraph in particular:"... found no evidence that any member of the Warren Commission other than Allen Dulles was party to the cover-up."

They were all witting, they all knew that what you report was happening, they all agreed to let it happen and they all, including Ford, who was present, decided to destroy the record of their awareness. You know I got this after years of effort under FOIA and you should know that I printed it in facsimile in Post Mortem. You also know that prior to its printing I offered you all the originals in it and released you from even the obligation of crediting me with having done the work.

So, even in your invalid simplification your are in factual error. They knew that exactly what your report says was happening when it happened. Members and staff. I have staff memos on it as I have other illustrations, not just the executive session of 1/22/64.

I can't even say you found no evidence because you didn't look for it. You found none because you pretended you did not have what you in fact did have. This in particular troubles me much.

In the areas of your conjectures, and your report is based on conjectures, you have basic factual error that is beyond remedy. There is relevance in anything you say only if a) you assume Oswald to be the or an assassin, which you do regardless of the semantics; or b) he served some agency of government, which you ignore almost entirely. (Where you do not you also are less than honest.)

To make your claim of no evidence of Commission awareness you have to have done at least rudimentary checking. Yet your entire report is based on an unquestioning assumption of the Commission's accuracy and integrity. You therefore have basic factual error and have destroyed what value your report might have had if your assumptions and approach could have been valid. Worse, the Commission'r record was corrupted to make the quote possible and I have for years had the proof of that as any genuine investigation should have had. You knew the conjecture you pursued came from my work. Yet heither you nor any of your staff even asked me by phone if I know anything about it or could provide you with any evidence about it. I told you I had done much work on that in New Orleans and you still did not ask. I hate to say it but without this error you had no report as it was drafted, no justification for the work at all.

I understand your political realities. This is why I asked why you went for this at all. It was bound to give you a conflict of interest. You resolved it in favor of Ford, not truth and the healing of this weeping wound. I do not for a minute think you look with approval on your party's clear intent of bombing itself back into the stone age and do not think it is at all congenial to you. But you knew that, too, before you undertook this responsibility.

You do not write me political realities anywhere else. The new intelligence committee willfind it impossible to exercise any meaningful oversight without the added and very complicated job of investigating the JFK assassination. If they investigate based on your report they begin with a dry well that will get drier and drier the deeper they dig. If there is a record of the Senate charging this committee with a real investigation, not

merely your committee's pious request that is not binding, I'd appreciate a copy for my knowledge and records. Your words here also are only conjectural,"... will have been formally charged to investigate any aspect of the Kennedy assassination." Moreover, I think the mandate of the committee itself included this charge. I also believe it did not meet its mandate. I know it was so interpreted because before your subcommittee was established I was consulted. Once your subcommittee was established that was ended.

As I told you I try to be forthright and with Members of Congress regard this as an obligation, not merely a personal way of living. You impressed me very much. While if I had know the doctrine of your report I'd have had nothing to do with it, not knowing it there is nothing I would not have done to help you. You know very well that publishing what I had in a book about to come out would have killed that book yet I offered it to you. I do not say you deceived me but you surely did mislead me by telling me you'd want to be in close touch and if you could not come here you'd send transportation for me. Because I believed you I did what I could not afford, took a private room in the hospital so there could be privacy in consultation. I phoned Dave to let him know where I was.

You opted for wierdos, incompetents, underinformed and plain self-seekers instead. If this was your right it also contributes to your present situation and what there may be in the future. It also means that even within your own framework you did much less than you could have, with both the FBI and the CIA - with no mention of the Secret Service, which Ford and his Commission regarded as its investigators where they did not so regard the CIA. There was, for one example, an FBI back-channel that told Hoover the truth while deliberately lying to the Commission. Les Whitten will tell you that while I was in the private room indended for your convenience I showed him how to establish it in maybe two minutes - and that he then did establish it. It would have helped your efforts on behalf of your party's possible candidate in the coming election because it would have proven the deliberateness of the FBI's lying to Ford and the others on the most basic evidence, not conjectures. With the CIA, knowingly or no better, incompetently you went for their secrecy with what was not secret. However, if you had not there would then have been the questionof Ford and the Commission's actual knowledge of what you pretend it did not know. If you had mentioned Nosenko the index of the Report would have disclosed no mention of him. Their files show the names of "D" and "A" and those who did the CIA's dirty-work but did make the Commission witting. (I understand your embarrassment that a Member of Ford's cabinet was one of those who covered up and suppressed.) In fact I have a long interview with A that he wanted me to tape. Another with his then girl friend describing their dash to disband that one camp. (There were others and I do have even pictures.)

I'm sorry for you for what you've done to yourself and sorrier for what it means to the country and to the already disenchanted youth. I am confident that before the election it will be embarrassing. Meanwhile, all the indications are that what eveidence you might have developed that might have some significance is and will be buried. To proclaim a coverup has not been new since I finished my first book in mid-February 1965. The word itself is in the title of the second book, of 1966. Sure, you gave a few new details, but what single fact about the crime itself? I know of not one.

Whatever you may have had in mind, whatever your intention, you did do what you could do to protect Ford from his own failings and from paying for them in votes. At the same time you used a nationwide audience to blame Johnson, whose partisan I never was, if you read what I wrote, for the cover-up.

There is no immediate possibility of undoing what you have done. But there is much more to the Ford record than you covered. I believe the Reagan and McCarthy in him will be out before a vote is cast. His government is doing what it can to suppress it. This is a political misuse of the government in an election year, for the benefit of one man, the man who runs the government.

My regrets, Harold Weisberg